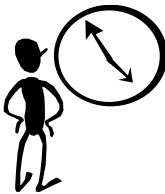


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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.
(every other week)

Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

Christ or Muhammad?

By Jefferson David Tant

The rapid spread of Islam has caused concern among Bible believers. Some 40 nations are majority Muslim, and most of the terrorism around the world has been fostered by Muslim extremists. While some experts have made a distinction between the terrorist activities of Muslim fundamentalists and true Islamic beliefs, it is apparent to many that the fundamentalists are actually practicing what the Qur'an teaches.

In order to strengthen the faith of Christians and help us to understand the claims that are made for Muhammad, we want to present some vivid contrasts between these two historical figures. And, obviously, there are things for Muslim readers to consider.

Christ Was Born According to Prophecy, but No One Foresaw the Birth of Muhammad

Old Testament writers previewed the career of Jesus in such detail that honest first-century observers could have picked him out of a crowd. These prophecies are throughout the Old Testament, as well as the New. J. Barton Payne has listed 3,348 verses that are prophecies of Christ. Liddon has counted 330 separate prophetic statements (Matthew 5:17-19, Luke 24:44; I Peter 1:10-12). Specific mention of Bethlehem as the Messiah's birthplace appears in Micah 5:2.

In view of God's plan to prepare the people for Christ's birth and ministry, it is amazing that there was no such effort concerning the birth of Muhammad. The claim is made that Muhammad was a prophet of God, the last and the greatest. Muslims say that Christ is a prophet, but that he is surpassed by Muhammad. Honest souls should be able to see a vast difference here, in that the foundation for Christ's work is solid, while Muhammad's is based on shifting sand, as there is no special attempt by God for his coming.

We admit Muslims claim there is a prophecy concerning Muhammad in Deuteronomy 18:15: "*The LORD your God will*

raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him."

There are obvious problems with this interpretation.

1. Moses was an Israelite, and the prophecy says the prophet to come was "*from among you, from your countrymen.*" Muhammad descended from Esau, not Jacob, and thus was not from the Israelite people.
2. Christ promised that all truth would be revealed within the first century, within the lifetime of the apostles. John 16:12-13 "*I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth ...*" (See also Jude 3.) This leaves no room for further revelations of Muhammad, the Pope, Joseph Smith, or any other latter-day so-called prophet.

Is it conceivable that God would propose to establish a world religion on one for whom he announced nothing to prepare the people for his arrival? Much attention is made by the Father and the angels over Jesus' birth in Bethlehem -- the Magi, (Matthew 2:1-2) and the shepherds (Luke 2:1-11), but what did they have to say about Muhammad's birth? Absolutely nothing! People acquainted with the Old Testament knew of Jesus' birth and made their way there. Did similar interests surround the birth of Muhammad?

Islamic denial of Christ's deity is partly based on his being born of human flesh. Islam has no concept of deity inhabiting the flesh, and thus believes that for God to have a son, he must have had a wife. "They say: '(God) Most Gracious has begotten a son!' Indeed ye have put forth a thing most monstrous! At it the skies are ready to burst, the earth to split asunder, and the mountains fall down in utter ruin, that they should invoke a son for (God) Most Gracious. For it is not consonant with the majesty of (God) Most Gracious that He should beget a son" (Sura 19:88-92).

Such views lack an understanding of the power of God, for if he could create Adam out of the dust, could he not plant a seed in the womb of Mary?

Christ's Genealogy Was Foretold in the Old Testament, but Where was the Divine Interest in the Genealogy of Muhammad?

We note again God's plan for the coming of Christ into the world. To prepare the people, especially the Israelites, to whom he would first come, God gave definite information. Part of the identity of Jesus was set forth in the genealogies found in the New Testament records of Matthew 1 and Luke 3.

The importance of this lies in the Jew's insistence on the importance of the lineage of Jesus. Unless verified, the Jews could definitely reject his Messianic claims. Jesus' royal lineage is found in Matthew 1, where his rightful claim to David's throne is verified, while Luke gives his rightful legal family line back to creation.

Consider Jesus' lineage:

- Seed of woman (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4),
- Seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:3; Galatian 3:16),
- Tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10; Hebrews 7:14),

- House of David (Isaiah 11:1; Acts 12:23),
- Divine in nature (Micah 5:2; John 1:1-2),
- Equal to God (Zechariah 13:7; Philippians. 2:6).

In vivid contrast to this abundant evidence, God evidently had no plans for the coming of Muhammad upon earth's scene. There were no predictions of his coming. There was no announcement of his coming. There was no celebration to herald his entry

In fairness to Islam, we note their claim that Muhammad, not the Holy Spirit, was the comforter or paraclete, promised by Christ to his apostles in John 14:16. But this claim completely fails in considering the context of Christ's promise.

The Holy Spirit was someone sent to the apostles, not someone coming 500 years later. It was someone the apostles would know, not some future stranger (John 14:17). He would come in the name of Christ (John 14:26). He would remind them of Jesus' teaching. (John 14:26). Muhammad (570-632) meets none of these qualifications. He was not sent to the apostles. He came too late to be known by the apostles. He did come in the name of Christ, i.e., authorized by Christ to teach. He certainly did not repeat the teaching of Christ or glorify him (John 16:14).

Jesus Worked Undeniable Miracles to Confirm His Claims, but Muhammad Worked No Miracles

It was common in the Old Testament period for God to validate the claims of the prophets by the miraculous power given to them. Such was the purpose of the miracles worked by Moses, Elijah, and others. We recall Moses' confrontation in Egypt with Pharaoh and Elijah's confrontation with the 400 prophets of Baal.

Jesus worked miracles to prove his claim to be the Son of God and the Messiah. Note the healing of the lame man in Mark 2:7-11, and what transpired after. While enemies attributed his powers to Satan, they never denied the reality of his miracles. Even the apostles confounded their enemies (Acts 4:16).

By means of his miracles, Jesus convinced many of his followers that he was indeed the Messiah and the Savior of the world. Muhammad gave no signs but depended upon the sword to "convert" people. On one occasion when Muhammad went to Medina and became the ruler, he resorted to killing those who refused to believe his message. What miracles could not do, for he performed none, he accomplished with the instrument of death.

Thus, Islam became a religion of physical conquest, as opposed to Christ depending upon the power of truth to persuade people. The Qur'an had no miracle to prove it is true, just as Muhammad had no sign to prove his claim to be God's prophet.

On the other hand, the Bible stands on the solid proof of countless miracles performed by Jesus and his disciples. The Qur'an resorts to parts of the Bible when it serves its purpose, such as in trying to prove that Muhammad's prophetic office was foretold, but then turns and claims the Bible is full of distortion, corruption, and incompleteness when it contradicts Islamic beliefs.

But you cannot have it both ways. Both the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon quote from the Bible, yet both claim the Bible has been corrupted.

The Father in Heaven Raised Jesus from the Dead to Verify His Deity, but Muhammad's Grave is Untouched

The evidence for Christ's resurrection is abundant. Both the Old and New Testaments predicted his resurrection {Psalms 16:10; John 2:19-21). Over 500 witnesses could testify of his resurrection (I Corinthians 15:4-8). The changed lives of the disciples were amazing, as they turned from a band of discouraged and fearful people to fearless proclaimers of the resurrection who were willing to die for their faith. People do not die for what they know is a lie.

Even the enemies of Christ admitted the tomb was empty (Matthew 28: 2-4; 11-15). No theory has been able to explain away the resurrection, which was cited as the final proof of who Christ was (Romans 1:1-4).

Located in Medina, Muhammad's tomb is a beautiful showplace with gardens and fountains surrounding it. It stands as a monument to the fact that Muhammad is dead. In the absence of any miracles or resurrection to mark him as a prophet, why should we believe in Muhammad or his teachings? The contrast between the empty and occupied tombs is quite revealing.

The Vast Difference Between the Qur'an and the Bible Says Much About the Differences Between the Two Founders

Neither man wrote the revelations that are attributed to them. Jesus wrote no part of the New Testament but made provision for the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles and prophets in their teaching and writing. It is claimed that Muhammad was illiterate, and thus wrote nothing.

Authentic copies of both sacred books do exist. This does not mean that both convey truth, but that they fairly represent what the original documents said. But the Bible claims it is complete and allows no addition or change (John 16:13; II John 9; Revelation 22:18-19). Therefore it is God's final revelation (Jude 3). The New Testament also affirms there is no need for a Qur'an, as it contains all we need (II Timothy 3:16-17).

The Qur'an could not be God's revelation, because it contradicts both the Bible and itself. The Qur'an has numerous contradictions with the Old Testament with respect to Noah, Abraham, Potiphar, Joseph, and Moses. The Qur'an contradicts the New Testament concerning Jesus, retaliation, marriage and divorce, and the taking and breaking of oaths.

Furthermore, the Qur'an's internal contradictions also present a problem. Belief in God by the Jew or Christian will reward them (Sura 2:62) "Those who believe (in the Qur'an) And those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), And the Christians and the Sabians, —Any who Believe in God And the Last Day, And work righteousness, Shall have their reward With their Lord: on them Shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve." (Sura 3:85) "If anyone desires A religion other than Islam (submission to God), Never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks Of those who have lost (All spiritual good)."

The requirement to slay the pagan, and the prohibition against coercion. (Sura 9:5) "But when the forbidden months Are past, then fight and slay The Pagans wherever ye find them, And seize them, beleaguer them, And lie in wait for them In every stratagem (of

war)...” (Sura 9:29) (Sura 2:256) “Let there be no compulsion In religion: Truth stands out Clear from Error...”

The nature of the two books stands in sharp contrast. Only a divine being could reveal truth over 1,500 centuries with no errors and no contradictions like that of the Bible. But the contradictory nature of the Qur’an’s teachings shows a flawed human origin. Why would anyone who knows the difference accept such a book?

Furthermore, Muhammad’s own words show he is not a true prophet. On the Plain of Arafat, near Namira mosque, Muhammad delivered his last sermon in 652: "No apostle will come after me, and no new faith will be born." I do not know that we can count the number of “new faiths” that have come since then.

The Modus Operandi of Christ and His Followers vs. Muhammad and His Disciples Reflect Radically Different Attitudes and Approaches

The work of Jesus and his followers always followed the method of teaching the Gospel and offering proof through miracles (Hebrews 2:3-4). Moral persuasion was the means of affecting conversions, for it was based on truth (John 8:32).

The propagation of the gospel was not to be by force (John 18:10-11, 36-37). Christ taught his disciples to love their enemies, do good to them, and pray for them (Matthew 5:44).

Muslims have long employed the sword of death to spread their religion. Nations have fallen to the sword, and history records multiplied thousands who died by the sword at the hands of Muslim conquerors. This continues even today in African nations in persecution against Christians and other non-Muslims.

When Muhammad returned to Mecca, he sent letters to all known rulers promising them safety if they embraced Islam. “When he died, unbelievers were brought to the faith by force of arms. A vast empire bowed before the shibboleth, ‘Koran, tribute, or sword.’” (Lincoln Library, p. 2056) The call for jihad (holy war) against the United States and its allies is the basis for much of the terrorism and killing that exists today. An Islamic scholar defines jihad as “‘An effort or strife’ Holy Fighting in the Cause of Allah or any other kind of effort to make Allah’s word superior. Jihad is regarded as one of the principles of al-Islam” (M. Za-kiuddin, *A Basic Dictionary of Important Islamic Terms*), [Reiber, p. 9].

Conclusion

The respective books and the religions they reveal stand or fall upon the evidence.

1. There is absolutely no evidence to support Muhammad as a prophet of God, or of the Qur’an as a divine revelation.
2. But the evidence is overwhelming that supports Christ as the Son of God and the Bible as a revelation of the mind of God.

Which will you take, Christ or Muhammad? Jesus said, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me*" (John 14:6). He is the one who now lives and works on our behalf (Hebrews 7:25).

Will you accept him and obey his will? "*He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned*" (Mark 16:16).